

A RUGBY FANTASY

(Continued from page 19)

psychological department of the University College to assist us in our problems. They are infinite in variety. There are simple cases of fear-complex—players afraid that they will not be able to display their abilities to the best advantage. Then we have emotional disturbances like falling in love. A most gifted place-kick missed twelve shots running. His affections had fastened by chance on a young woman, but, though he was one of the most fearless tacklers in the Dominion, he was too nervous to declare himself. We soon corrected that maladjustment."

"Did he marry the girl?"

"Possibly. But we don't encourage players to marry. This young woman



"Emotional disturbances like falling in love"

is an enthusiastic devotee of cricket, and I doubt if her influence would be beneficial."

He went on to tell more about this psychology business. "The cases I have cited are but surface explorations. We dig down deeply into the Id, and have made some curious and indeed startling discoveries. There is the egg complex. The egg of course closely resembles the football in shape, and infantile experiences with eggs lead to various adult inhibitions and frustrations. We had one most brilliant three-quarter — very fast, with a most dangerous side-step and a deadly tackle, but every now and then his fielding was deficient. We discovered that when he was a small child his brother threw an egg in his face at the breakfast table, with the consequence that ever afterwards he had been liable to be frightened when anything in the shape of an egg was thrown at him."

He described some of the methods of training backs. Fullbacks learned to gauge the strength of mind—something on the lines of the Beaufort scale at sea. Five-eighths had to weave their way through lines of upright sticks at a set speed. They mustn't touch a stick; if they did it was electrically recorded. I protested that you couldn't be sure of getting men with such natural gifts. I recalled that one year the Auckland selector had five first-class five-eighths to choose from, but later on, not one. "Forwards are made, but five-eighths come from Heaven." He looked at me rather coldly.

"There is that difficulty, possibly. But the situation is very different now. New

Zealanders have become really football-conscious. Their attitude used to be quite amateurish. Not that I am suggesting anything in the nature of professionalism. I refer to a mental state. Our conception of football has been re-orientated." (I had expected that word.)

WE passed the psychological laboratory and I had a dim view of students at work—possibly looking for the egg in the Ego. There were several girls. I wondered if the probing of the sub-conscious was entirely confined to football. Then to the library and the research department. Nowhere did I hear a laugh or see a smile.

"We consider there is a great deal to be learned from the methods of the Great Masters of the game, and the classification and study of moves leading to scores. Bradman closely studied the ways in which batsmen were dismissed in Test matches and shaped his batting accordingly. We follow a similar plan. But it is disappointing to find that often convincing testimony as to how a try was scored is lacking. George Smith's winning try against Scotland, for example. We cannot get a clear picture of what happened."

"Yes, history's like that," I interposed. "They're still arguing about Waterloo and wondering why Hannibal didn't march on Rome straight after Cannae." He said quite a literature had accreted round Bob Deans's disallowed

try against Wales. A history honours student at the University had proposed to write a thesis about it, but the professor wouldn't consent.

"I suppose it's a great honour to be a student here," I asked. A very great honour, the Director replied, if he passed in strategy, tactics, and history. "You will notice the letters 'P.R.S.C.' after names in the papers and the Rugby Union annuals. That stands for 'Passed Rugby Staff College.'"

"Well, thank you very much."

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WHEN I woke up, Winston McCarthy was still saying, "Hullo, New Zealand." I have been told that long dreams are in actual duration extremely short.

Taranaki Round Table

[S enough being done to publicise Taranaki to the rest of New Zealand? How can the burden of the country housewife be lightened? What should be done to meet the continued expansion of the city of New Plymouth? Should Taranaki's country schools be consolidated, or its local body members paid for their services? These are some of the questions to be discussed by panels of local speakers in a new series of impromptu discussions entitled *Taranaki Round Table*. The questions were submitted to Station 2XP by local listeners, and the discussions were recorded during a recent visit of the NZBS Mobile Recording Van to the province. They will be broadcast in the first instance from 2XP, and then from 2YA, starting on August 15.

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(Signed) Noel Burrell.

* * *

Fencourt, Cambridge,
3rd Dec., 1947.

Alfred Jenkins,
22 Manners St., Wellington.

Dear Sir,—I must say that I wished I had done this course long before now, as it makes one feel as though life is really worth living. I can say that I have never felt fitter before and consider that every young chap should take this course, as it most certainly builds one up.—Yours faithfully (Signed) John Hogan

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